Your Head Can Be A Prison

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Your Head Can Be A Prison

by IBegToDreamAndDiffer

Summary

Will knows the truth. He and Hannibal have a talk.

Notes

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Will barely paid attention during the drive from Hannibal's office to his house; one minute he was helping Hannibal stuff Miller into a large plastic sack, the next he was sitting at Hannibal's marble kitchen counter. It wasn't that he lost time- he hadn't since his encephalitis had been cleared up- it was just that he had far too much on his mind; his feelings for Hannibal, the fight with Miller, and finally Hannibal's murdering alter ego.

Really, it was Will's feelings that had him in turmoil, so much so that he just nodded when Hannibal asked if he was hungry. Will's feelings for Hannibal had always been tumultuous. Even before getting to know the man- and it was only now that he realised how little he'd ever known Hannibal- he'd respected him. Hannibal had annoyed him, definitely, with his never-ending patience and understanding, his ability to get under Will's skin and just *know* him. But at the same time, those things had drawn Will to Hannibal. Despite Hannibal's manipulations, Will still felt closer to him than he did to anyone else.

So Hannibal had manipulated him, so what? He still understood Will. He'd never called Will unbalanced, and if he'd hinted at it, it had always been with understanding and compassion. Will was unsure if Hannibal was actually capable of compassion, being a psychopath and all, but he'd still never been scared of Will. He'd never truly *judged* Will, not like Alana and Jack and everybody else Will had ever met or acquainted himself with.

On the other hand... well, Hannibal had *manipulated him* . Regardless of his reasons, everything he'd ever done- every word, every action- had been to further along his own plans and make Will depend on him so that when Will broke, it was Hannibal he's go to.

Will chewed on his bottom lip as he thought. Hannibal wanted him to be a killer. He wanted Will to be like the Chesapeake Ripper. And Will knew, without a doubt, that that just wasn't who he was. He might have dreamed of murder, but he didn't want to go out and do it. He wasn't like Hannibal; he couldn't ignore that little part of him that said, *Hey, no, that's a bad idea. Step back and have a drink instead* . Besides, Will felt no urge to go and slit someone's throat. He wondered if Hannibal did. Was that why he murdered people? Was there some little voice in his head whispering to kill and slaughter and eat?

Will doubted it. Most serial killers were caught *because* they had urges, and those urges grew louder and stronger until the person couldn't hold back anymore. That's when they got sloppy and got caught. Even after murdering someone in front of Will, Hannibal had never been out of control. He'd been calm, collected, a little messy and tired, but otherwise still Hannibal Lecter. No, something else led Hannibal to kill and eat people. Will wanted to know what it was.

Will looked up to see that Hannibal had finished putting together whatever it was they'd be eating that evening.

'Why do you kill people?' Will asked. His throat was slightly dry, and his words came out hoarse, but Hannibal heard him anyway. He glanced up and turned to look at Will, who was sitting at the end of the kitchen island.

'Do you believe me to be unhinged, Will?' he asked, sounding amused.

'No,' Will said. 'At least not in the traditional sense of the word,' he elaborated. 'You're clearly not sane- no sane person kills and stages people like you do. But you're not *insane* , either. You know fully well that what you do is wrong, but you do it anyway. You were able to become a psychiatrist and consultant for the FBI without them discovering your proclivities, so you're able to lie so well that not even the FBI psychological evaluations can tell that you're a serial killer. That clearly points to superb control.'

Hannibal looked slightly pleased by Will's words, but hid it by focusing on the dishes he was making. 'Are you thinking about the choices I offered you, Will?' Hannibal, once again, asked instead of answering.

'Maybe,' was all Will would offer.

Hannibal chuckled slightly, and Will was struck by how *real* it was. He didn't know if Hannibal was just being completely honest, now that Will knew the truth, or if Will's illness had been so bad that he'd been unable to see the person suit that Hannibal habitually wore. It didn't really matter all that much, Will decided. If he hadn't seen it with his own eyes, he never would have believed that Hannibal was a murderer. The man was just too calm, too compassionate, too... *human* . In another life, he would have been a fantastic actor.

'Perhaps we should save the discussions until after we eat?' Hannibal suggested. Though he then grabbed the two plates and left the kitchen, forcing Will to follow, so it wasn't so much a suggestion as an order. Will still followed, and watched as Hannibal placed the plates opposite each other. Hannibal then drew out a chair for Will and Will took it, mumbling a soft thank you as Hannibal pushed his chair in.

Rude. Hannibal ate the rude. Right.

'Why the rude?' he asked.

Hannibal raised an eyebrow but didn't answer, instead disappearing back into the kitchen for a few minutes. When he returned it was with cutlery, a bottle of wine, and two glasses. He put their forks and knives down, their glasses, too, then poured their drinks.

'Is there any particular reason why it's the rude?' Will pushed. 'Or do you just like having a reason to pick them?'

'An excuse, you mean?' Hannibal countered. 'Do I convince myself that it's okay to kill these people *because* they are rude, thus ridding myself of any lingering guilt?'

He glanced down at Will, who met his eyes. 'No,' Will said, 'you never feel guilt. Why should you? They're pigs, after all; hardly worthy of guilt.'

Hannibal smirked and took his seat. He hadn't put his jacket, vest or tie back on, giving him a much more casual look. He also hadn't cleaned up all that much; the cuts on his neck and cheek, as well as his busted lip, had been cleaned a little, but his hair was still mostly a mess, and there was a bruise forming just below his left eye.

'I can't stand the rude,' Hannibal revealed as he swirled his wine. 'Really, is common courtesy too much to ask? There's no need to treat anybody with contempt if they haven't earned it. I like killing people, Will, and I hate the rude; thus, the rude become my meals.'

Will nodded slowly- Hannibal's reasoning *was* logical, despite being horrific- and glanced down at his plate. It was some type of meat with a garnish of red sauce and a few greens. He swallowed thickly. 'What is it?'

'The dish has a French name,' Hannibal said. When Will looked his way, Hannibal was openly smirking. 'Or are you asking *who* it is?'

Will swallowed again. 'It's human,' he stated with certainty. Because Hannibal Lecter *would* serve Will human meat after Will had discovered what he was.

'It is,' Hannibal confirmed. 'A rather rude construction worker who broke one of the back windows of my Bentley. I asked for his company's name so they could pay for the damage, and he was very discourteous.'

Will frowned. 'When did that happen?' he asked. He couldn't remember Hannibal's Bentley having a broken window.

'Eight months, give or take a few days either side,' Hannibal said.

Will looked up once more. Hannibal had already cut into his meal, and Will watched as he slid his knife against his fork, collecting stray bits of seasoning and sauce. He then lifted the fork to his mouth, and his eyes met Will's, dark as he slid the piece of human into his mouth.

Will looked away quickly, but not out of disgust. Yes, he should have wanted to vomit- *human, they were eating fucking humans!* No, it was because even knowing what Hannibal was, even while *watching* Hannibal consume another human being, Will still found him gorgeous. He was still attracted to Hannibal's grace, his pose, even his fucking fingers. Will wanted to laugh. He needed therapy. Well, therapy from someone who *wasn't* a cannibalistic serial killer trying to turn him into a murderer.

'You wait, don't you?' Will said, even though he knew; he was still putting it together, even now, each piece going towards the new picture of Hannibal Lecter currently living in his mind. Only now Hannibal had joined with the Chesapeake Ripper, forming his own little corner in Will's mind. 'You collect victims, but only strike when you want to kill.' He paused. 'Or when you run out of meat.'

'Indeed,' Hannibal said. 'There are some people whom I kill almost immediately; some transgressions just cannot be ignored for too long, I'm afraid.'

'Like Miriam Lass?' Will suggested.

'And Dr Sutcliffe,' Hannibal said.

Will froze. Of course. Of *course* . 'You're the Copycat Killer as well,' he breathed.

Hannibal smirked. 'Yes,' was all he said.

Will stared down at his plate. 'Did you feed me Cassie Boyle?' he asked.

'The very next morning,' Hannibal revealed.

'Protein scramble,' Will snorted and slumped back in his seat. Hannibal tutted, no doubt a comment about Will's posture, but Will ignored him. Even back then Hannibal had been making hints, jokes, about what he really was.

"*I don't find you that interesting."*

"*You will."*

And oh, how Will *did.*

'You like cannibal puns, don't you?' Will said.

Hannibal chuckled. 'I do,' he agreed. 'A habit I can't seem to break.'

That seemed so silly, especially considering what Hannibal was, that Will couldn't help but laugh. Hannibal quirked an eyebrow, head tilted as he stared at Will, but Will didn't ask what he was thinking.

'You've made it so that I need you,' Will said. Hannibal paused, fork halfway to his mouth. 'I know that you wanted it that way,' Will continued. 'Everything you did was a manipulation to get me to depend on you and *need* you. But I made it easy for you. I went to you whenever I had a problem because I didn't know you all that well. I'd rather you think I'm insane than Alana think it.'

'Because you have romantic feelings for her,' Hannibal said smoothly, then finally popped his forkful into his mouth.

'Not anymore,' Will said.

Hannibal raised an eyebrow and swallowed before asking, 'And why is that, Will?'

'I don't know,' Will shrugged, 'there are probably a number of reasons. I was too unstable for her, and by the time I *was* stable, she... she wasn't what I wanted or needed anymore.'

Hannibal, again, cocked an eyebrow.

Will rolled his eyes. 'Don't act like you have no idea who I'm talking about.'

Hannibal smirked. 'It may be crass, given that you know, but I *am* glad that you need me, Will.'

'I bet you are,' Will muttered.

'I think you're still under the misconception that you don't effect me nearly as much as I effect you,' Hannibal said.

He paused and Will glanced up, again meeting Hannibal's eyes. Now that he knew what was there- *exactly* what was there- he found that it wasn't as mind-numbingly terrifying as it usually was. With the people he knew, Will avoided eye contact out of respect; he didn't want to know their secrets, what they weren't willing to tell him. With Hannibal, Will knew everything. Hannibal *wanted* him to know everything. Hannibal was controlled enough that even when Will looked for an extended period of time, there was no danger of the profiler falling into that darkness. Hannibal could close him off completely, and that... well, Will found that addictive.

'You have intrigued me since the moment we met,' Hannibal eventually continued after a beat of silence. 'I found your mind fascinating and wanted to know more. After a time I wanted to break you, as you know.' Will nodded. 'It's become more than that, though,' Hannibal admitted slowly. 'When Budge attacked me, he alluded to your death, and I found myself uncharacteristically... saddened.'

'Really?' Will asked, sitting up in surprise.

Hannibal inclined his head. 'It's a feeling I haven't experienced since I was a small boy,' he said. 'As I'm sure you've guessed, I don't feel emotions like normal people; I'm incapable of it. Certain things are similar; lust, delight, pleasure, the basic carnal emotions. But other things like hope, happiness... no, I'm unfamiliar with those, and I have been for three decades now.'

He paused once more to regard Will over the table, and Will barely refrained from fidgeting. He wasn't used to being scrutinised so thoroughly, especially by someone like Hannibal. Hannibal's gaze was all encompassing, all consuming, and Will realised that if he was exposed to it enough, he'd become addicted. Everything about Hannibal was addicting.

'I mourned your loss,' Hannibal spoke, breaking the silence, 'and for the first time in many years I hoped for something; that you would walk into my office, alive and well. When you did I found myself inordinately happy.'

'Just because I was there?' Will asked.

'Because you were alive,' Hannibal agreed. 'I didn't realise that, by trying to claw my way into you, you had also managed to claw your way into me. It had become a two-way street that I wasn't aware of until I thought that Budge had killed you.'

'Isn't that why you sent me after him, though?' Will asked.

'No,' Hannibal said. 'Budge was meant to be a gift for you, like Hobbs.'

Will breathed out heavily. 'I knew you were the man on the phone,' he muttered. Then, he shook his head, and quoted Abigail Hobbs. '" *You be my dad, you be my mom, and you be the man on the phone* ". She *looked* at you when she said it.'

'Yes,' Hannibal said. 'I was unaware if she knew, or if she was just playing. I didn't know until later.'

'So Abigail knows?' Will asked. 'About the real you?'

'Not completely, no,' Hannibal shook his head. 'She suspects, but doesn't know for sure. She simply thinks that I'm invested in her care.'

'Are you?' Will questioned.

'A part of me is, certainly,' Hannibal said. 'Like you, I feel an obligation to Abigail. I did, after all, kill her father, even if you were the tool that took his life.'

Will snorted. 'Gee, thanks, Dr Lecter.'

Hannibal's lips twitched upward in a small smile. 'A part of me cares for her,' Hannibal continued, 'but a larger part of me wants to wind her up and watch her tick.'

Will nodded slowly, processing that information. He shouldn't have been surprised; that was Hannibal, after all. 'Do you still want to wind me up?' he asked, glancing up at Hannibal again. 'Watch me go?'

Hannibal tilted his head to regard Will, and Will played with his meal as he waited. 'No,' Hannibal admitted, 'not particularly.'

Will raised his eyebrows. 'No?'

Hannibal shrugged one shoulder delicately. 'Manipulating you will no longer work,' he said, 'at least not to the extent that I used to do it. You know me, and you see me. I could manipulate small things, certainly, as a lot of people do to each other in their daily lives.'

'But you don't want to anymore?'

'No,' Hannibal repeated. 'I'd much rather just watch you now; how you act, the decisions you make, based on our current situation.' He paused, then smiled. 'Of course, if I happen to continue trying to mould you into the beautiful creature I truly think you could be, well... at least you're aware of it.'

Will snorted again and ducked down to spear a piece of someone on his fork. He eyed it briefly before popping it into his mouth. It tasted just as delicious as every other meal Hannibal had cooked for him, and Will wondered what it said about him, that he could sit here and eat human meat without feeling disgusted. But Will had always been a little different. He'd killed people- not like Hannibal killed people, but still- and he thought like serial killers for a living. He dreamed of murder and wanted to have sex with a psychopath who butchered and gift-wrapped people just to taunt the FBI.

So... yeah, cannibalism. Why not?

After all, he'd already partaken in human meat. What was another meal?

Hannibal was watching him with undisguised fascination, and Will shrugged after swallowing.

'I've already eaten people before,' he said.

Hannibal blinked. 'Indeed,' was all he said.

Will's eyes were still on his plate when he cut up another bit. 'You don't want to kill me, do you?' he asked before popping it into his mouth.

'I'd rather not,' Hannibal agreed.

'But you will, if I force you to,' Will said after chewing. 'If killing me protects you.'

'Any creature would kill another to protect themselves,' Hannibal stated. 'I am just more honest about it.'

Will rolled his eyes, and he was sure that Hannibal was smirking, but didn't look up to confirm it.

'If I don't force you to?' Will asked. 'I mean, I'm not going to tell Jack- or anyone, for that matter. We both know that I'm too dependent on you now.'

'Are you, though?' Hannibal asked. 'You haven't hurt anyone. You're no longer sick. What do you need me for?'

Will sighed and put his fork down. He picked up his glass of wine, untouched until now, and took a large swig.

Hannibal scowled. 'Really, Will, there's a finesse to drinking wine that you're completely ignorant of.'

It was Will's turn to smirk. 'Teach me, then,' he taunted.

Hannibal raised an eyebrow, but did just that. He picked his own glass up and twirled it like Will had seen him do in the past. 'First you must let the wine breathe. Then you take in the scent.' He brought the glass to his nose and inhaled deeply, making Will lick his lips. 'Second, you taste,' Hannibal said. He took a small sip, barely a mouthful, and Will watched the older man roll the liquid over his tongue, tasting the full flavour before swallowing. 'Savour it,' Hannibal breathed, 'because what is the point of drinking it otherwise?'

He looked up sharply, and Will swallowed, eyes darting away. He could feel his cheeks heating up, and cursed himself as he grabbed his own glass. 'A lot of people drink to get drunk,' he muttered. He did as Hannibal had suggested, though; scented, tasted, before swallowing. He had to admit that the wine tasted better, especially mixed with the flavours of their meal.

'You're sexually attracted to me, Will,' Hannibal said, and Will was glad that he'd waited until after he'd swallowed his drink. 'What's to be done about that?'

Will scowled across the table at him. 'I'm more caught up in the whole “my therapist/friend is a serial killer who eats his victims and was manipulating me so that *I'd* be a killer” thing. I'd rather focus on that at the moment.'

Hannibal smiled. 'Very well,' he allowed, and they both went back to their meals.

'Are you ever going to tell me why you are the way you are?' Will asked after a few minutes of silence.

'Perhaps,' Hannibal said, and Will couldn't stop the relief that spread through him. Hannibal didn't sound angry about Will's outburst. They were still... okay. Not good, because they were *far* from that. But they were okay. 'I feel no compulsion to kill, Will. No little voice, no dark urge. I kill because I enjoy it, and because I can. That is all.'

'And the eating people thing?' Will asked. He met Hannibal's eyes for that, because it had to be something big. You didn't just *suddenly* decide to start eating your victims. There was a cause.

Hannibal's eyes were tight. 'Perhaps,' he repeated, and Will let it go.

'Am I a prisoner, or a guest?' was his next question. 'I won't tell anyone, but... you can hardly trust me, can you? I might run.'

'I would like to be able to trust you, Will,' Hannibal said.

'Which means you don't.'

'Not with everything,' Hannibal agreed. He put his forearms on the table, either side of his plate, and stared at Will as he said, 'I hope that our relationship will progress to our mutual satisfaction.'

'Even if I never kill anyone like you do?'

'Even if you don't become the monster that I had always hoped you would be,' Hannibal nodded once, his bangs brushing his eyebrows. *Damn him*, Will thought. The profiler was only just beginning to realise that he had weakness for Hannibal's hair. Damn, damn, damn.

'I won't be,' Will stated with conviction, and Hannibal just stared at him. 'But I won't tell anyone, either. I don't want you to go to prison.' And he didn't. He wasn't completely okay with what Hannibal was doing, but... no, he didn't want Hannibal locked behind bars, only accessible during visiting hours. He wanted Hannibal where he always was; in his big, fancy house, in his lovely, controlled office, and in Will's head.

As messed up as all of that was, it was what Will wanted.

'I suppose we will both see how you act on Monday when faced with Jack Crawford,' Hannibal said.

'Yeah,' Will agreed, holding Hannibal's gaze. 'I suppose we will.'

{Fin}

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